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PRESS RELEASE

USAID ANNOUNCES INCREASED EMERGENCY AID TO ALLEVIATE IMPACT OF DROUGHT

MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE - Today USAID Mission Director Jay L. Knott announced that the United States of America is increasing significantly its assistance to Mozambique for humanitarian relief and disaster mitigation. Mr. Knott indicated that USAID approved 4,000 metric tons of additional food aid for Mozambique in late November; USAID will provide grants totaling approximately USD 1 million for NGOs to undertake food cultivation and water management activities; and, Mr. Knott has authorized the immediate reprogramming of some project funds to support the distribution of seeds to farmers in affected areas. The announcement from USAID is in response to the Mozambican government's appeal for assistance last month and Mr. Knott's visit to Mabote district, Inhambane last week.

Since June 2005 USAID has provided approximately 34,000 MT of food aid to Mozambique, including cornmeal, beans, and sorghum, worth approximately \$15.8 million, through the World Food Program (WFP). This represents approximately 50 percent of the resources pledged to date to the WFP Southern Africa Protracted Relief and Rehabilitation Operation for Mozambique. USAID also plans to provide about \$1 million for food security and water management interventions in response to the drought in the northern districts of Inhambane, an area that has received little food aid support beyond on-going school feeding programs. This funding will also support food-for-work interventions. USAID will consider financing additional drought recovery and mitigation activities for the winter months if the need continues.

USAID is helping to address Mozambique's longer-term, chronic food insecurity issues by supporting six food security programs, worth a total estimated value of \$ 85 million, in four provinces of Mozambique – Manica, Sofala, Zambezia and Nampula. An October 2005 analysis indicated that a number of drought-affected districts are located in these provinces. Over 287,000 rural households are benefiting from USAID's programs, which assist smallholder farmers to improve productivity and to market their crops, thus increasing assets and improving livelihoods. Due to the drought, this year's production was down and the harvest small. However, anecdotal evidence indicates that families participating in USAID's food security programs were better able to cope with the drought due to crop diversification, improved varieties of crops, and post-harvest protection of food.

USAID's programs collaborate closely with the national agricultural research institute and with the Ministry of Agriculture in testing and promoting the adoption of new technologies that improve agricultural productivity. To date, with USAID support, improved varieties of maize, cassava, groundnuts, beans, pigeon peas, cowpeas, sweet potatoes and cash crops such as cashew, sesame, sunflower, paprika, and pineapple have been introduced, resulting in increased incomes and improved food security. USAID also supports FEWSNET, a monthly bulletin providing information on emerging food crises and assessments of vulnerable populations. As the December-March cyclone season approaches, the FEWSNET-supported cyclone and flood warning systems will save lives and protect assets in Mozambique's drought-stricken areas.

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